

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Recognize elements of a problem-solution essay
- Write a problem-solution essay

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for the students of

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 323
- **Teaching Model**, p. 324
- **Template**, p. 325
- **Guidelines for Peer Response**, p. 326
- **Rubric**, p. 328

Teach

- 1. Introducing Problem-Solution Essay:** Explain to students that a problem-solution essay examines the causes and effects of a problem and suggests a solution. Ask students where they would be likely to find problem-solution essays. (*Sample: On the editorial page of a newspaper, in a letter to an important person such as a senator, or in a proposal to the student council.*)
- 2. Teaching Problem-Solution Essay:** Distribute the **Student Lesson Summary** and review the **Here's How** strategies for prewriting, drafting, and revising a problem-solution essay.
 - Make a two-column chart on the board, listing "Problems" on one side and "Solutions" on the other. Have students suggest several problems, identifying them from issues that affect their lives. Then ask them to suggest solutions for each problem.
 - Discuss which sets of problems and solutions could lead to a good paper.
- 3. Guided Practice for Prewriting and Drafting a Problem-Solution Essay:** Distribute the **Teaching Model** to the class. Have students read the problem-solution essay in the **Teaching Model** aloud or silently to themselves. Tell students they will recognize several of the **Here's How** strategies and that they should pay attention to the bold text and notes. Lead a discussion of the strategies, using the following points.
 - **Choosing a Topic:** Ask: Why do you think the writer chose this topic? (*Sample: The writer most likely cares about the neighborhood and the families who live there. As a young person, the writer probably enjoys spending time in the park.*)
 - **Identifying the Problem:** Where does the writer identify the problem and its significance? (*Sample: The introduction shows the significance of the playground, and the second paragraph explains the problem.*)
 - **Brainstorming Solutions:** Ask: What alternative solutions might the writer consider in addition to the proposed solution? (*Sample: The writer might consider asking the city to buy the land.*)
 - **Stating the Solution:** Ask: Where does the writer state the solution? What is the benefit of stating it in this part of the essay? (*Sample: The writer states the solution immediately after stating the problem. The rest of the essay discusses how the solution will be carried out.*)

PROBLEM-SOLUTION ESSAY , CONTINUED

- **Collecting Supporting Details:** Ask: What details support the writer’s solution? (*Sample: The plans about how to petition for funding and raise funds in the community support the writer’s solution.*)
- **Explaining Causes and Effects:** Ask: Why is it important to show causes and effects in a problem-solution essay? Where does the writer show causes and effects to illustrate why his or her solution will work? (*Sample: It is important to show how a proposed solution would cause the problem to go away. The writer explains the causes of the problem—the 50-year lease and the church’s need for cash. The writer also explains how getting signatures on a petition and showing enthusiasm at a cleanup day will cause the city to give the neighborhood funding.*)

4. Guided Practice for Revising and Editing a Problem-Solution Essay: Lead a discussion of the revising and editing strategies using the following points.

- **Opening with a “Hook”:** Ask: Do the first few sentences grab the reader’s attention? How? (*Sample: The first sentence mentions “the world’s largest slide,” which should make readers curious.*)
- **Adding Supporting Details:** Ask: Do you think the essay has enough supporting details? If not, what would you add? (*Sample: Students may disagree about whether or not there are enough supporting details. More details about exactly how to gather signatures for the petition, how to organize the cleanup day, and how to find experienced grant-writers might be helpful.*)
- **Concluding with Strength:** Ask: Does the conclusion sum up the main ideas and reinforce what has already been said? How could the conclusion be improved? (*Sample: The conclusion does restate and reinforce the main idea of buying the playground from the church. It could be strengthened by restating more details of the proposed solution.*)

QUICK CHECK. Have students think of a real-life problem and brainstorm several solutions that could be developed in an essay addressed to a specific audience.

Practice and Apply

Assign a 5- to 8-paragraph problem-solution essay for homework based on this exercise.

- **Template** should be used to plan problem-solution essays.
- **Guidelines for Peer Response** is an in-class activity.
- **Rubric** should be used to evaluate problem-solution essays.

Answer Key: Template

Students should fill out the template to plan their essay and help them organize and prepare it. Answers should indicate that students understand the problem-solution structure of an essay.